

Columbia AIDS Alert

Spring 1988 Issue of the newsletter of the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project

Students at Risk for AIDS Offered Expert Treatment Through the Columbia University Health Service

If there is any chance that you are infected with HIV, the virus that can cause AIDS, you should be aware that expert treatment is available here on campus through the University Health Service.

A recent study has shown that the pneumonia that has been responsible for 60% of fatalities from AIDS is now generally *preventable*. If you might be infected with HIV (the virus that can cause AIDS), you should be evaluated and followed by a health care provider expert in AIDS so that, if necessary, you can begin preventive therapy against this pneumonia and other aspects of HIV illness at the earliest time possible.

Confidential, expert medical care and support is now available through a new experimental program of the University Health Service at no cost beyond the regular fee. Assisted

by the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project, the Health Service provides a comprehensive program of care and support for HIV-infected students, including:

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- Potentially life-saving treatment available on campus
- Project documents harassment and discrimination
- AIDS Committee Report released
- AIDS Memorial Quilt coming to Columbia
- Condom Awareness Week at Columbia
- 800 attend conference on early treatment for AIDS

• Periodic

laboratory evaluation of the immune system at no extra payment, including lymphocyte subset studies (T4-cell count, T4/T8 ratio)

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AIDS COMMITTEE RELEASES REPORT

What follows are excerpts from the Report of the Columbia University ad hoc Committee on AIDS, released this spring after nearly two years of research and deliberation:

...Present evidence has documented HIV infection only through sexual intercourse, the sharing of intravenous drug

paraphernalia contaminated with fresh blood, the receipt of contaminated blood or blood products, or perinatally from infected mothers to their fetuses. All current medical evidence indicates that casual contact, such as working together, living together in dor-

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"HEY AIDS FAGGOT!"

Project Documents Homophobic and AIDS-Related Harassment and Discrimination

On March 1st, thirty men and women attended a discussion marking the start of a new effort by the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project (CGHAP) to document homophobic and AIDS-related harassment and discrimination on the Columbia campus.

Margaret McCarthy, a long-time Gay Health Advocate and an intern at the New York City Commission on Human Rights, described the new program:

"Harassment and discrimination have always been a fact of life at Columbia for gay men and lesbians, but AIDS has made things even worse. We want to document this to bring it to the community's attention and to show the University that this is not going to be swept under the carpet. People who have been harassed or discriminated against because they are perceived to be gay or because someone believes that they are at risk for AIDS should contact CGHAP's Documentation Project.

Examples of harassment are: name-calling, offensive graffiti, "cold-shouldering," vandalism, sexual harassment, and threatened or actual physical violence. "We are particularly interested in those incidents in which harassers try to

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AIDS Report...

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mitories, attending class, sharing food and utensils, and ordinary sports activity, does not spread the infection. ...[T]he Committee concluded that medical evidence does not support any form of mandatory screening of individuals for the infection or any exclusion of students, faculty, or staff with the infection from University activities... [I]n general, no special University precautions to protect the uninfected are necessary other than intensive educational programs.

...The University Statement of Non-Discriminatory Policies prohibits discrimination against otherwise qualified students, employees, or applicants on the basis of handicap or disability. ...The Statement of Non-Discriminatory Policies prohibits discrimination in areas including employment (hiring, promotion, transfer, demotion, and termination), medical care, housing (graduate and undergraduate), and student life (admission, enrollment, attendance, readmission, use of dining halls, athletic and other facilities). Individuals who have been diagnosed as having AIDS, ARC, or asymptomatic HIV infection are protected under the University's Statement of Nondiscriminatory Policies. ...Students [may file]: Discrimination Grievances ...through the Office of Equal Opportunity and Affirmative Action.

Portion of AIDS Memorial Quilt To Be Displayed At Columbia

A portion of a vast mourning quilt for people dead from AIDS will be displayed at Columbia on April 13th. The Names Project Quilt is composed of thousands of individual panels, each one bearing a name sewn by grieving friends and relatives in memory of a loved one dead from AIDS. Larger than several football fields, the Quilt was first displayed on the Mall in Washington, D.C., during the 1987 National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights. An estimated 600,000 lesbians, gay men, straight friends and supporters attending the March saw the Quilt.

Cloth walkways allowed access to panels of every description: sewn or painted; drawn or appliquéd; spangled or

somber. Mourners wept as they found familiar names or as they sensed how the quiet domestic detail of the Quilt captured and made human the enormity of this country's losses to AIDS.

The Columbia contingent included members of the undergraduate Gay and Lesbian Alliance, as well as representatives of the graduate and professional school gay groups, the Gay Health Advocacy Project, and the Barnard AIDS Peer Educators.

Moved by the power of the Quilt and mindful of the need to make our university community aware of the human dimension of AIDS, Kevin Hall, CC '86, currently a student at SIPA and a Gay Health Advo-

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In addition, the Committee recommends that the University take action to prevent individual harassment against

"Individuals with AIDS, ARC, or asymptomatic HIV infection are protected under the University's Statement of Nondiscriminatory Policies."

those who have or are perceived to have AIDS, ARC, or HIV infection....

...The University's role clearly must be to supply health

education and information services specifically addressed at AIDS, ARC, and HIV infection. The Committee recommends that Columbia continue to make available to students and employees accurate, understandable, and current information concerning HIV infection and its medical and social implications. This program should be available to the entire Columbia community, both students and employees. It is only through such a broad sharing of information

and views that the University as a group of individuals can respond to the AIDS epidemic in a knowledgeable, fair, and healthy way. ▼

Improving the Odds Against AIDS

Eight hundred people attended a panel discussion last November 17th entitled *AIDS: Improving the Odds*. The panel of prominent physicians, researchers, and AIDS activists met here at Columbia for the first public discussion of a new and important area of AIDS research: care and treatment for people without serious symptoms who are at significant risk for AIDS.

For the almost two million Americans infected with HIV, the virus that causes AIDS, realistic hope for treatment

may soon combat fear and uncertainty. Treatment before symptoms appear could slow progress from HIV infection to AIDS. As the sophistication and efficacy of early treatment improve, HIV infection may start to be seen as a chronic condition that, like asthma, is very serious but controllable.

Public discussion has so far been centered around treatment for people with AIDS and prevention measures (such as condoms) for the uninfected. Despite the fact that there are probably 30 asymptomatic HIV-infected people for every case of AIDS now recorded, little attention has been devoted to this group.

The panel discussed currently available anti-viral therapies to fight HIV infection, treatments to prevent opportunistic infections before they strike, immune boosters, and modifications to general health care that take account of the unique needs of HIV-infected people.

The panel was organized by Laura Pinsky and Paul Douglas of the Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project (CGHAP) with financial assistance from the Columbia Gay and Lesbian Alliance and the University Health Service. To buy a transcript, VHS videotape, or audio cassette of the panel discussion, call 280-2878, 9 AM to 5 PM. ▼

Discrimination...

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use the AIDS epidemic as justification for their homophobia," says McCarthy.

Discrimination may occur in such areas as athletics, campus and dormitory life, hiring, promotion, firing, grading, recommendation, institutional support for projects, grants, awards, honors, and provision of services such as security.

"You can also report hostile comments or actions directed not at you as an individual but at groups such as gay men, or lesbians," McCarthy added, "no incident is too small to report." Nonames are required, and confidentiality is guaranteed. For instructions on how to file a report, call the CGHAP Discrimination Documentation Project answering machine at (212) 969-0255. ▼

If you want to work on the issue of AIDS and you can volunteer 4-6 hours per week, apply to join the Gay Health Advocates. Call 280-2878 ▼

Memorial Quilt...

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cate, has arranged to display part of the New York Memorial Quilt, modeled on the national Names Project AIDS Quilt, here at Columbia. The New York Memorial Quilt honors the thousands of New York area residents who have died of AIDS. Panels from the Quilt will be unfurled near Hamilton Hall. For more information, contact Kevin Hall at 280-2878.

If you would like to make a panel in honor of someone dead from AIDS, contact the panel-making workshop of the New York Memorial Quilt at (212) 292-2672 or (212) 513-5000.

All New York Memorial Quilt panels completed by June 10th will be displayed in Central Park on Saturday, June 25th, 1988, coinciding with the arrival of the entire national Quilt for display here in New York City. ▼

RESOURCES

- Columbia Gay Health Advocacy Project:**
400 John Jay, (212) 280-2878
- Clinic for HIV-infected students:**
Contact Laura Pinsky at (212) 280-2878
- Discrimination Documentation Project:**
Contact Margaret McCarthy at (212) 969-0255
- NYC Gay & Lesbian Anti-Violence Project:**
(212) 807-0197
- NY Memorial Quilt panel workshop:**
(212) 292-2672 or (212) 513-5000
- Columbia Memorial Project:**
Contact Kevin Hall at (212) 280-2878
- AIDS counseling & anonymous HIV antibody testing through CGHAP:**
Call for appts. at (212) 280-2878
- Barnard AIDS Peer Educators:**
Contact Leslie Cantor at (212) 280-2092
- Columbia Health Education Office:**
Contact Ann Williams at (212) 280-5453
- Columbia Gay and Lesbian Alliance:**
Roderick Dial, President; (212) 280-5113
- Lesbian & Gay Community Center:**
208 W. 13th St. (nr. 7th Ave.), (212) 620-7310
- Gay Men's Health Crisis AIDS Hotline:**
(212) 807-6555
- PeopleWith AIDS Coalition:**
(212) 627-1810
- ACT UP:**
Meets Mondays at 7:30 PM at the Lesbian & Gay Community Center; (212) 533-8888
- Gay & Lesbian Youth of NY:**
(212) 242-1212